

MEMORANDUM

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

TO: Users of Census Material

FROM: Ellen Snyder [Boston Redevelopment Authority]

DATE: August 18, 1970

SUBJECT: COMPARISON OF POPULATION DATA COLLECTED BY THE FEDERAL AND STATE CENSUSES AND BOSTON POLICE LISTING

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There are three prime sources of information on the population of Boston: the Federal Census, the State Census and the Annual Report of the Election Department, the so-called "Police List" for which information is gathered annually by the Police Department and amended by the Election Department to include voters whose change of address is effective January 1.

These three sources do not collect identical information, and it's important to know in what sectors of the population the differences will be found.

In general, the criteria for all three enumerations state that persons with a usual place of residence are enumerated at that place, and persons without a usual residence are enumerated where found. The Police List enumerates only individuals who are twenty years of age and older.

All three enumerations specify the same criteria with respect to persons in hotels; boarders and lodgers; tramps and wayfarers; hospitals, prisons, asylums, and institutions (such as orphanages) other than hospitals. Thus, the three counts ought to agree, roughly, on the total in each of these sectors of the population, for the total number of individuals under twenty years old in such institutions inside the City limits probably is not great.

Significant differences which do occur among the three counts hinge on the varying definitions of "abode" or "residence" used by the State and Police List on one hand, and the U. S. Census on the other. By the Federal definition, an individual's "usual place of abode" is the place where he lives and sleeps most of the time - not necessarily the same as his legal residence, voting residence or domicile. To the State, however, "usual place of abode" is not only where a person regularly sleeps, but his permanent residence, in the sense of voting residence or domicile.

Domicile is defined as the place with which a person has a settled connection for determination of his civil status or other legal purposes. Normally, living and working in an area determines domicile. If, however, a couple live and work in one area, but intend to return to a different area, where they maintain their automobile and voter registration, then that other area remains their domicile. If they are working, supporting themselves and going to school part-time, they can declare their domicile in either their locality of origin or Boston. Auto registration, intent and voting residence are the determining factors.*

In the case of a student who receives his entire financial support from a given area, intends to return to that area, and considers himself to be from that area, the area referred to is his domicile - not his school location. If the student is of voting age, then voter registration, auto registration, and intent are important in determining domicile.

The only differences between the populations enumerated by the decennial Mass. State Census and the annual Police List are (1) that the Police List enumerates only residents twenty years of age and older, and (2) that the Police List does enumerate students aged twenty and older, regardless of domicile. This is the only instance in which the Police List departs from the criterion of permanent residence or domicile.

Differences between the two local censuses and the Federal census are more substantial. They occur in the enumeration of persons absent overseas, in members of the armed forces, of college students, and crews of vessels.

Persons Absent on Census Day

All three surveys do enumerate those persons who are absent from their usual place of residence on Census Day, but the Police List and Mass. Census include persons who are absent

* The Boston voting requirements are one year's residence in Massachusetts and six months in the City.



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for extended periods of time, while the U. S. Census ignores them. For the local censuses, the absence can be of indefinite duration, as long as the individual intends to return.

Armed Forces

All civilians and military personnel living on a military or naval reservation, who claim no other place as their usual or permanent place of abode, are enumerated by the State and the Police List as residents of the district in which their base is located.

Also in the State and Police surveys, any members of an enumerated family, or persons who formerly lived with such a family, serving with the armed forces or the Peace Corps, are enumerated with that family. All such persons are enumerated whether located in or outside of Massachusetts, if they are presumed to be alive on January 1 of the census year.

In contrast, in the Federal census, persons in the armed forces quartered on military installations are enumerated as residents of the districts in which their installations are located without respect to place of domicile. Members of their families are enumerated where they actually reside. Americans in the armed forces overseas are not included in the population of any of the States or the District of Columbia.

The crews of vessels of the U. S. Navy and of the U. S. Merchant Marine in U. S. Harbors are counted by the Federal census as part of the population of the ports in which their vessels are berthed on April 1. This is, again, in contrast to the State and local enumerations which enumerate only such civilian, military and naval personnel as claim no other place as their usual or permanent place of abode.

College Students

As already mentioned, the Police List does enumerate college students over the age of twenty years in their usual place of abode in Boston.

The State includes all legal residents of Massachusetts attending school anywhere inside or outside of the Commonwealth as part of the population of the Commonwealth. They are enumerated with their families.

The Federal census enumerates students as residents of the communities in which they attend school.

Comparison of Estimates

The difference between the populations counted by the Police List and the State Census should be on the order of 200,000 persons, mainly those under twenty years old.

The difference between the Police List count and that done by the U. S. Census should be on the same order of magnitude (200,000) because, apart from the lack of enumeration of the under twenty population, differences in enumeration are not very large, and in fact appear to cancel one another out. Persons whose permanent residence is in the City of Boston but who are abroad for an extended period probably equal in number the crews of vessels berthed in the harbor on an average day, around 150 persons. Members of the Armed Forces stationed in Boston who actually reside in Boston probably number not more than a few thousand in total, though actual figures on this are virtually impossible to come by.

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The State census differs from the Federal census in not counting the 40,000-50,000 college students who reside in the City. Other differences are as stated in the preceding paragraph. In view of this and the preceding factors, we can say that the difference between the State and Federal tallies for Boston will be around 50,000. This difference will be concentrated in the student and non-institutional civilian adult populations.

